Similarly in the case of RRBSs, the target for lending to priority sector has been set at 60%. A large majority of the clientele of RRBSs is comprised of small and marginal farmers.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. To reduce the burden of interest on crop loans availed by farmers for Kharif and Rabi 2005-06, an amount equal to two percentage points of the borrower's liability on the principal amount upto Rs. 1,00,000/- each was credited to their account. Thereafter, from Kharif 2006, to ensure that the farmer receives Short-Term Production Credit at 7% with an upper limit of Rs. 3 lacs on the principal amount, the Government is providing interest subvention of 2% per annum to Public Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks on their lending from their own resources and refinance at concessional rates to cooperative banks and RRBs on their borrowings from NABARD.

Development of cruise tourism

*210. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop cruise tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has posed objections to cruise tourism; and

(d) if so, the reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) Ministry of Tourism in partnership with Ministry of Shipping has been promoting cruise tourism in the country both for domestic and overseas tourists. A High Power Steering Group under the Chairmanship of Minister of Shipping with Minister of Tourism and Culture as co-chairperson has been set up to formulate cruise shipping policy. The Steering Group has recommended policy measures for issues related to smooth immigration and customs clearance, upgradation of ports infrastructural facilities, connectivity to ports, rationalisation of taxation and cabotage relaxation to promote and develop cruise tourism products. Ministry of Tourism has already given clearance for operation of the following cruise services.

i) M/s Star Cruises for operating its cruise from Mumbai and Goa to Lakshadweep.

ii) M/s Indian Ocean Cruise Ltd. for operating its cruises from Goa to Lakshadweep *via* Mangalore, Cochin and Trivandrum.

(c) No such objection of Ministry of Environment and Forests has been received in Ministry of Tourism.

(d) Does not arise.

Clearance for Air Kerala.

*211. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI K.E. ISMAIL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for the formation of a Budget Airline 'Air Kerala' is pending with Government for necessary clearance;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal along with the reasons for the delay in giving clearance;

(c) whether Government are considering relaxation of existing conditions for operating international flights for the above proposal as a special case; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (d) Though no proposal for formation of any airline by the name 'Air Kerala' is pending with the Government for clearance, the Government of Kerala have informed that a public limited company, 'Air Kerala International Services Limited' has been registered as a Special Purpose Vehicle for a budget airline project. Government of Kerala has requested this Ministry for exemption to the proposed airline from the stipulated conditions relating to fleet size and the length of operation in the domestic sector for an airline to be considered for international operations. This request was not considered as the existing provisions of minimum fleet size of 20 aircraft and experience of 5 years continuous operations in domestic sector for permitting an Indian scheduled carrier to